



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

**75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901**

MAR 07 2016

Certified Mail: 7015 0640 0001 1122 1021

Councilmember Gary Hooser
Council Services Division
Kauai County Council
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

Dear Councilmember Hooser,

Thank you for your letter of February 25, 2016 to EPA Region 9 Regional Administrator, Jared Blumenfeld, regarding a pesticide incident at Syngenta Seed, LLC (Syngenta) in Kauai. I am responding to your correspondence on his behalf. We are aware of the incident described in your letter and we share your concerns.

Pursuant to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the State of Hawaii has the primary authority for regulating the use of pesticides. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is the lead for investigating pesticide use incidents. EPA provides oversight of the state's enforcement program. In this oversight role, EPA has been in regular communication with HDOA and we are closely monitoring the on-going investigation.

With respect to your request for an update regarding the incident, it is EPA's understanding that, on the morning of January 20, 2016, approximately nineteen workers entered an agricultural field at Syngenta following a recent application to the field of Chlorpyrifos and Permethrin. We also received information that as many as ten of the nineteen workers were transported to the hospital and later released. It is our further understanding that an HDOA enforcement inspector was on site at the time of the incident on an unrelated matter and was able to quickly respond by monitoring the situation and interviewing workers.

EPA has requested that HDOA conduct a full investigation of the incident. HDOA recently submitted an initial incident report to EPA, which we are reviewing. Since the investigation of this incident is an active enforcement investigation, we are not able to provide additional details at this time.

I want to assure you that we are continuing to have discussions with HDOA regarding the investigation and are working with HDOA on appropriate follow-up to this incident. I hope that this information is helpful. If you have additional questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. Roberto Rodriguez of my staff at (415) 972-3302 or by email at rodriguez.roberto@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Trombadore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" being more prominent and the last name "Trombadore" following in a similar style.

Claire Trombadore,
Assistant Director
Enforcement Division